THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The white spot disease in shrimp aquaculture has been reported from the maritime States in the country, causing an estimated production loss of about 10,000—15,000 tonnes of shrimp.

(b) To assist shrimp farmers in the better management of their farms and to prevent disease outbreaks and shrimp mortalities, technical assistance is provided through laboratory facilities to select disease free healthy seeds. Training is imparted to Fisheries Extension Officers and shrimp farmers on early diagnosis of disease and health management practices. Guidelines have been issued on pond preparation, water and feed management, stocking, application of pro-biotics, etc. Demonstration programmes and publicity campaigns are also organised for educating shrimp farmers on best management practices. A revised Insurance Scheme *viz.* Market Agreement on Aquaculture (Shrimp/Prawn) Insurance is being implemented by the General Insurance Corporation of India and its subsidiaries which provides for a comprehensive cover for loss due to disease.

Cow Slaughter

†1536. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to convene a meeting of State Governments for Uniform legislation in the country to stop the cow slaughter;

(b) if so, by when;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government are aware of the sentiments of public regarding cow slaughter; and

(e) if so, action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) As enjoined by Article 246(3) of the Constitution, the preservation of cattle is a matter on which the State has exclusive power to legislate.

(d) Yes, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(e) in view of the (c) above, no action is to be taken by Central Government.

Benefits of Technology and Expertise to Local Farmers

1537. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the steps taken to extend technology and expertise of the Agricultural Universities/Research Institutes to the local farmers direct to enable them to gain by their experiences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) have taken up the following frontline extension programmes for the purpose:—

(1) Established 261 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) with the State Agricultural Universities (SAU), ICAR Institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGO), other educational institutions, and a few State Governments and corporate bodies. The activities of KVK include technology evaluation and impact assessment through on-farm testing and front-line demonstration; and its dissemination through training of farmers and in-service personnel. During 1998-99, these KVKs have organized:—

(i) 10,696 training courses benefiting 2.58 lakhs farmers;

(ii) 2,502 vocational training courses benefiting 45,909 youths;

(iii) 1,224 training programmes benefiting 21,917 extension functionaries to update their knowledge;

(iv) 51,765 extension activities such as kisan melas, field days, exhibitions, kisan goshties, radio and TV talks, film shows etc.;

(v) 145 KVKs brought out monthly newsletters/quarterly news bulletins.

(2) The Council have taken up a proposal to strengthen the existing Zonal Agricultural Research Stations (ZARS) to take up the additional functions of KVK in 53 districts where there is no KVK, to provide a strong linkage between technology generation, assessment and refinement, and dissemination.

(3) The Council have recently sanctioned for establishment of 40 Agricultural Technology Information Centres (ATIC) with the selected SAUs and ICAR Institutes to provide a single window support system to provide